



Don't Move Firewood Protect Idaho's trees and forests

Keep Idaho's natural heritage safe from invasive insects and diseases

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(Coeur d'Alene) -

Each summer and fall, millions of Americans head to national and state parks, campgrounds and forests to enjoy the outdoors. Many bring along their own firewood, not realizing that bringing firewood from home puts the nation's forests at risk by potentially spreading tree-killing pests. While most of these pests can't travel far on their own, many can hitchhike undetected on firewood, later emerging and starting infestations in new locations hundreds of miles away.



Over the last hundred years, invasive insects and diseases have killed tens of millions of trees in forests, cities, and towns across the country. In addition to the obvious impact to the environment, this damage can have a devastating impact on recreation and business, as well as property values; it can increase the intensity of forest fires; and the cost to try to control the pests can be astronomical.

About 75 percent of new infestations are caused by the transport of infested firewood to campgrounds and parks.

The Don't Move Firewood campaign began in 2007 as a response to the rapid spread of the emerald ash borer, a small, green, Asian beetle which was most likely brought to the United States on wood packaging in the early 1990's. Often described as one of the most destructive insects to ever invade this country, the emerald ash borer, or EAB, has already killed over 100 million ash trees in the U.S., and is a threat to all ash trees nationwide. The annual cost for tree treatment, removal, and replacement alone probably tops \$1 billion, not to mention other costs that the unwelcome little beetle incurs.

But the EAB is far from alone. More than 450 non-native forest insects and diseases are now established in the United States, including Asian longhorned beetle, European gypsy moth, Dutch elm disease, Sirex woodwasp, thousand cankers disease, hemlock woolly adelgid, sudden oak death, and many others.

To limit the spread of these insects and diseases, many states regulate how far firewood can be legally transported, and some states prohibit out-of-state firewood from being brought into the state. Additionally, the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) has quarantines in many states on firewood and other wood products that could harbor these pests.

Although most states with legal restrictions on the movement of firewood are in the east or Midwest because of the severity of the problem in those regions, nearly all states now formally recommend limiting the movement of firewood. (For information about firewood regulations and recommendations in specific states, visit <http://www.dontmovefirewood.org/map>).

Although Idaho does not have a specific regulation restricting the movement of firewood within the state, the Idaho Department of Agriculture strongly advises that firewood be bought and used locally. Many visitors to Idaho live in areas under quarantine for emerald ash borer, gypsy moth, and other pests, and their accidental introduction into the state could be devastating to the Idaho environment and economy.

"We encourage everyone to help protect our country's natural resources from invasive species," said APHIS spokesperson Joelle Hayden. "Taking basic steps - like not moving firewood and following Federal and State quarantines - will help keep these dangerous pests from spreading unintentionally."

Tips for Preventing the Spread of Invasive Tree-Killing Insects and Diseases:

- Obtain firewood near where you will burn it. The closer the better, and 10-50 miles maximum. (Depending on state regulations, "near" could also be defined as wood from a nearby forest or in the same county.)
- Wood that looks clean and healthy can still have tiny insect eggs, or microscopic fungi spores, that could start a new and deadly infestation. Don't risk it.
- Aged or seasoned wood is still not safe. Insect eggs and diseases can survive for several years in unburned firewood, and some pests will re-infest cut wood.
- Certified heat-treated firewood is a safe option if you must transport firewood.
- Respect all state and local regulations - some areas are subject to serious fines for violations. (For more information, visit <http://www.dontmovefirewood.org/map>. For lists of federal and state quarantined areas, visit: <http://www.hungrypests.com>.)
- If you already moved firewood, burn it immediately and completely. Rake up and burn the debris.
- Tell your friends about the risks of moving firewood. Working together gives us the greatest chance of keeping our forests and trees healthy long into the future.



Idaho Department of Lands

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